

# 33 World Englishes in Global Advertising

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## 1 Introduction

Theodore Levitt, the Business Guru from Harvard, predicted in the 1980s that “The era of multinational companies customizing their products and advertising . . . is over.” The assumption was that in the era of rapid globalization and super-branding, advertising messages all over the globe will conform to extreme homogeneity in terms of the use of language, the display of logo, and the content of the message. English will naturally be the chosen language of global advertisers. Two decades later, although English is the most favored language of global media and advertising and its use is skyrocketing, creative needs of global advertisers are rarely met by the consideration of global homogeneity and language conformity. Thus, with super-branding and hyper-globalization going hand in hand with diversity marketing, the cross-fertilization of world Englishes and other languages in advertising is also becoming more prominent than ever before.

## 2 English Users and Advertising

Since the pioneering publication of Leech (1966), there has been a proliferation of studies devoted to advertising in English. Following Leech’s model, a bulk of linguistic studies concerned themselves with the linguistic and literary devices (phonology, morphology, lexis, borrowings, clause and sentence structure, puns, metaphors, simile, and alliteration, etc.) used by advertisers. Recent works mark a point of departure in a number of ways: (1) *Scope*: In addition to works devoted to advertising in the Anglophone countries – United States, Canada, United Kingdom, and Australia – a body of research devoted to advertising in Asia, European Union, and South America is growing rapidly. In typological terms, following Kachru’s Three Concentric Circles model of English users, research since the 1980s has crossed the threshold of the Inner

Circle and has entered into the Outer Circle and the Expanding Circle. (For details about Kachru's model (1981), see Chapter 25 in this volume.) Notable works from the three circles are as follows: Inner Circle – Cook (1992), Forceville (1998), Geis (1982), Goddard (1998), Hermeren (1999), Myers (1999); Outer Circle – Hilgendorf and Martin (2001), Martin (1998, 2002a, 2002b); and Expanding Circle – Haarmann (1984), Hsu (2001), Jung (2001), Lee (2003), MacGregor (2003). The boundary between the Outer and the Expanding Circles becomes rather fluid in the case of European countries. (2) *Context*: The Inner-Circle advertising is grounded in the monolingual context while the advertising from the other two circles capitalizes on the bilingual and multilingual environment of those countries. (3) *Theoretical and Analytical Orientation*: The primary focus of the Inner-Circle studies is the syntactic interface with semantics and pragmatics (Geis, 1982; Vestergaard and Schrøder, 1985), while contact situation is key to Outer- and Expanding-Circle studies. (4) *Discourse Analysis*: The unit of analysis has shifted from sentence level to discourse. (5) *Comparative Studies*: Works such as Tanaka (1994) exemplify a comparative advertising discourse of Inner- and Expanding-Circle English. (6) *Topical focus*: The topics addressed by the research include but are not necessarily limited to the following: Speech Acts, Conversation Maxims, semantic notions (e.g. presupposition, inference, implications), persuasion, manipulation, and deception receive significant attention in Inner-Circle advertising studies; topics such as language mixing, language attitudes, linguistic innovations, group targeting, and domain allocation are the prime focus in the other two circles. Content analysis of ads forms a common core of monolingual and bilingual ads.

Inspired by the sociolinguistic and socio-psychological research on one hand, and globalization and marketing forces on the other, the treatment of the mixing in various linguistic and media forms has gained several new dimensions during the past two decades. This chapter will focus primarily on these two latest trends with special reference to world Englishes.

### **3 Key Issues**

Although a number of issues confront global advertisers (choice of medium, media buying, etc.), from the perspectives of the topic at hand, the following three issues are the main concerns of international advertisers.

#### **3.1 *Standardization versus adaptation***

One of the central concerns of globalization for international advertisers is how to resolve the paradox of globalization and localization (national and regional interests, appeals, affiliations, etc.) in terms of formal and functional linguistic manifestations (see Friedman, 1999; and Berger and Huntington, 2002 on the general and various types of globalizations). This concern has manifested itself in the form of the “standardization” versus “adaptation”

debate in international advertising, media, and marketing (see Heileman, 1997; Hite and Fraser, 1988; Kanso, 1991; Kujala and Lehtinen, 1989; Mueller, 1992; Onkvisit and Shaw, 1987; Ryans and Ratz, 1987, among others). Such issues of debate include: Should logo, colors, and other iconic representations be subjected to monolithic norms or should they be adapted to regional norms, tastes and sensitivities? Should models/actors in an ad represent a fused style with universal appeal or mark specific Western and non-Western identities? These dichotomies are driven by the consideration of the standardization versus adaptation issue.

### ***3.2 Language choice and language attitude***

The linguistic aspect of the standardization versus adaptation debate is the question of the most suitable linguistic vehicle for globalization and customization. There is no doubt that the question of language choice is practically resolved. English is the choice of global advertisers and marketers. English has effectively dethroned its competitor languages, such as French and Russian, and continues to do so with more vigor and dynamics, thus becoming the single most important language of globalization. Indeed a cursory examination of world advertising reveals that ad writers and marketers either consciously or unconsciously subscribe to bilingualism. English is viewed as the most suitable linguistic tool for promoting global bilingualism.

Although the language choice is settled, the question of which variety of English is appropriate is still very much alive. English is undergoing dynamic changes in the process of engendering and shaping global market discourse; this has important ramifications for international advertising media and marketing on one hand and world Englishes on the other.

### ***3.3 Audience reach and modality choice***

One of the serious challenges that confront international advertisers is how to tap "new emergent hot markets" in international business, dubbed B2-4B (Business to 4 Billion). The hot new market is the 4 billion people worldwide. With the saturation of traditional urban and domestic markets, marketers are in search of new markets. Rural and semi-rural areas in countries such as India, China, and Brazil are potential "hot markets." The urgent problem for advertisers then is how to reach the target new consumers, who are linguistically and geographically dispersed. How do you reach a target audience which lives in 637,000 villages and speaks scores of officially recognized different languages? The simple solution is to make use of conventional mass media (television, radio, and print). However, the reach of conventional media is limited in a number of ways due to the skyrocketing cost; geographical, linguistic, and social barriers; and limited or lack of reach (signal towers and frequent power failures) of electronic media in some parts of the world. This issue requires an unconventional approach to modes of communication

and message transmission. Bhatia (2000) details non-conventional media (e.g., wall advertising, video van and other such non-conventional advertising forms) which are used by global advertisers in India and other developing countries to reach the new audience. The issue of local language choice and/or national/world varieties of Englishes in unconventional media gives a new perspective on the overall debate on standardization versus adaptation.

## 4 Approaches

In addition to the linguistic and semantic/pragmatic approaches, theoretical and analytical frameworks for advertising analysis are as diverse as fields concerned with the interaction of language and society: sociolinguistics (Halliday, 1978; Kachru, 1981; Labov, 1972), ethnography of speaking (Hymes, 1974), sociology of language (Fishman, 1972), critical discourse analysis (van Dijk, 1985), semiotics (Barthes, 1984; Foucault, 1981), speech accommodation (Giles, Coupland, and Coupland, 1991), language and ideology (Fowler, 1993; Thompson, 1978), communication (Myers, 1999), among others. See Bhatia (2000: 108–19) and Chapter 32 in this volume for details.

Analytical tools include content analysis, ANOVA, chi-square, frequency table, t-test, and regression analysis.

On methodological grounds, both qualitative and quantitative techniques are employed. Data collection methods include random sampling, judgmental sampling, nonprobability sampling, and stratified random sampling drawn from both conventional and non-conventional advertising. In addition to interview and survey methods, experimental techniques are also employed. Experimental techniques have been the salient feature of psycholinguistic aspects of advertising research. See Samiee and Jeong (1994) for details. The main concern of psycholinguistic research is to address issues pertaining to memory and product name recall. In recent years, this type of research has begun to align itself with the multilingual nature of advertising.

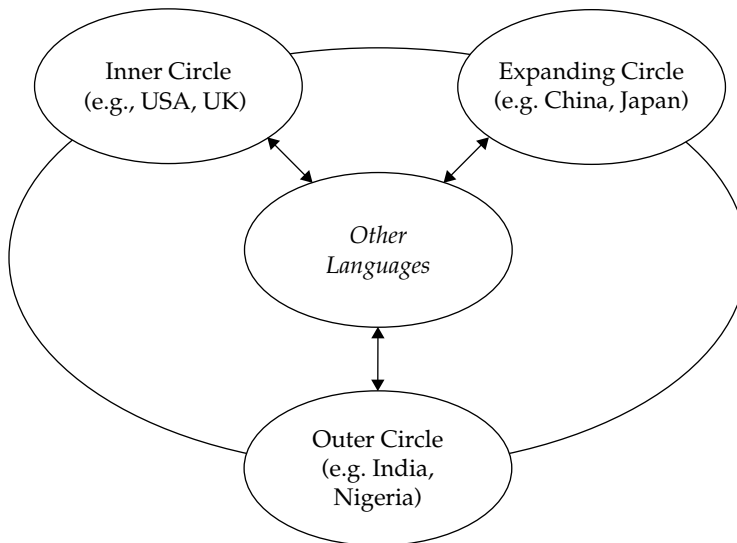
## 5 Multiple Mixing and World Englishes

Based on the pattern of advertising outside the Anglophone world, Piller (2003) notes that advertising functions as a site for language contact. Advertising, for instance, can be seen as an intrinsically mixed medium – a mixture of written–spoken forms, text–image mixing, music, etc. In terms of language mixing, even Inner-Circle advertising shows some openness to language mixing. The addition of a few diacritics and phonological/syntactic adaptations lends monolingual ads the flavor of French, German, or other European languages (e.g., *L'Éggs*, *el Cheapo*, *Norishe*). Besides this low-level cosmetic mixing, the more frequent and dominant trend in global advertising is the “high-level” fusion which manifests itself in the following four ways:

- mixing of world Englishes,
- mixing of world English accents,
- mixing of English with other languages,
- mixing of English with non-Roman scripts.

### 5.1 *Mixing of world Englishes*

The influence of British and American advertising on global advertising is so significant that Inner-Circle Englishes seem to be exercising a “melting pot” effect on global Englishes. In addition to the common lexicon (drawn from fashion, entertainment, beverages, food, sports, music, and other sources of popular culture), the use of structures such as a string of noun phrases (*Oak Wood Furniture Express*), negative structures (*no hassle, no payment*, etc.), and discourse styles (e.g., informationalization, promotional discourse, “cold call” scripting; see Goodman and Graddol, 1996: 141–57) reflect the important ways in which the qualitative aspects of global advertising are undergoing homogenization (see Bhatia and Ritchie, 2004 for more details). Nevertheless, it would be premature to claim that the influence of Inner-Circle Englishes is unidirectional (i.e., from the Inner Circle to the Outer and Expanding Circles). Linguistic innovations outside the UK, Canada, and the United States have left a lasting influence on native-English-speaking advertising. The bi-directional accommodation and mutually-feeding relationship of global Englishes is the salient feature of international advertising, as shown in Figure 33.1.



**Figure 33.1** World Englishes and language mixing: contact and convergence

## 5.2 *Product naming and world Englishes*

Nowhere is the pattern of mixing world Englishes more obvious than in the area of product naming. The success story of the Walkman (invented by Japanese advertisers) is a case in point. Although it was met with great skepticism initially in the native-English-speaking world, its innovative appeal silenced puritans and skeptics. Now it has become not only a part of the global English lexicon, but also a model of a very productive strategy in product naming in international advertising.

What is even more interesting is that so pressing is the need for product naming through English that, a little more a decade ago, the Japanese Ministry of Trade and Industry (MITI) determined that there were not enough names for the hundreds of soft drinks being produced in Japan. To fill this gap, the emergency use of non-sense English-sounding words (McKeldin, 1994: 71) such as *posmic*, *Cham-pe*, was approved by the government. It is no accident the choice of language for filling such a gap was English.

In the non-English-speaking world, product naming and company naming is the domain for which English is the most favored language. Bhatia (1987: 35) shows that English performs an overwhelming function in product naming. Based on the analysis of more than 1,200 advertisements primarily in Hindi that were printed between 1975 and 1985, the study revealed that more than 90 percent of the advertisements analyzed carried a product name in English. It is also true even of products for the rural market where familiarity with and literacy in English are minimal. The following leading soap/detergent brand names current in India are drawn overwhelmingly from English: Arial, Cinthol, Det, Gnat, Lux, Lifebuoy, Magic, Bonus, Liril, Margo, Palmolive, Rexona, Sunlight, Surf, Wheel, Marvel, Crowing Glory, and Ponds. The two notable exception are Nirma and Hamam. Meraj (1993: 224) shows a similar trend in Urdu advertising in Pakistan. Her sample reveals that English product names account for 70 percent of the ads while only 9 percent of product names were drawn from Urdu. The remaining 21 percent were mixed product names (English + Urdu) such as *Chanda Battery Cell*, *Good Luck Haleem*, and *National Kheer*. The same trend is widely attested in Russia and other European countries. Thonus (1991) identifies ten different structural types of English-Portuguese hybrid product/business names.

In Japan and Korea, English product names qualified with English first-person possessive pronouns (e.g., *my juice*, *my car*) are quite frequent. The possessive pronoun can be further subjected to the process of reduplication (e.g., *MyMy Workman*).

While Inner-Circle English is enriching other Englishes, it is in turn being enriched by product names drawn from other languages: *Nike* (Greek), *Volvo* (Latin), *Samsara* (Sanskrit), and *Nokia* (Finnish). The mutually feeding relationship among the world Englishes and other languages is shown in Figure 33.1.

### 5.3 *Mixing of world English accents*

The incidence of accent mixing in global advertising ranges from standard to non-standard accents at national and international levels. In television commercials from the Inner Circle, the mixing of local/regional accents is utilized not only to generate local appeals and identities but also to render socio-psychological effects such as trustworthiness of the product advertised and sincerity on the part of advertisers/actors. A case in point is the use of a Southern accent in US advertising. In global advertising, on the other hand, a wide variety of national/European accents are employed to render the international appeal of the product. For example, McDonald's does not exclusively rely on standard British or American English accents to invoke the international branding of its product and company. According to Piller (2003: 177), "it seems that some of the major brands may actually be moving away from the exclusive use of English. At the time of writing, McDonald's, for instance, is running an advertising campaign in Australia that features a commercial set in Italy, with characters using a few Italian words and manifesting a heavy Italian accent in English." Such a move is crucial for global indexing as opposed to asserting either British or American identity. Due to the overt phonetic component, the ethno-cultural stereotypes are marked often by means of world English accents. For instance, images of holy men, immigrant cab drivers, or food items (curry) often invite the use of an Indian accent in English. Similarly, a black English accent marks black Urban US ghettos. On the power and ideology of world English accents, see Chapter 32 in this volume.

### 5.4 *English mixing in non-English advertising*

In contrast with the use of symbolic or mocking use of foreign languages in Inner-Circle English advertising, the qualitative and quantitative pattern of mixing with English in non-Inner-Circle English advertising is significantly different. Bhatia and Ritchie (2004: 530–4) show that beside product names, the use of English has found its way into the structural domains of advertising, such as attention-getters, company logo or name, packing and labeling, pricing, slogans, and even the main body of the text. The acquisition of such domains signifies the power of English in Outer- and Expanding-Circle advertising.

Based on cross-linguistic study of advertising, Bhatia (1992, 2001) showed that the mixing with English is a near-universal tendency. Subsequent studies further confirm this claim. Martin (1998, 1999) shows in her study of more than 4,000 French television commercials and print ads that English is widely used. The increasing use of English is particularly notable in cosmetic and beauty-product advertising in France. Given the international status of French, the linguistic rivalry between French and English, together with the linguistic attitudes of French speakers and the French academy, it is particularly

surprising to find English in a domain in which French has asserted its supremacy, authority, and international status for centuries. Attention-getters also favor the use of English over French. Expressions such as *advanced cream*, *extra help makeup*, *multi-protection* are being steadily used not only as attention-getters but also in the body of French advertisements in the context of offering explanations for the merits of the product in question (Bhatia, 1992). The same pattern is emerging with more vigor than ever before in Asian (see Japan: Takashi, 1990, 1992; Wilkerson, 1997; Korea: Jung, 2001, Lee, 2003; Taiwan: Hsu, 2001) and other European countries (Switzerland: Cheshire and Moser, 1994; Spain: Aldea, 1987; France and Germany: Hilgendorf and Martin, 2001; Russia: Ustinova, 2001).

In considering the quantitative aspects, what is the proportion of English language material in non-English advertisements? According to a Dutch study of television commercials, one-third of the commercials on Dutch television contain English words (Gerritsen et al., 2000). Based on the analysis of 658 German commercials broadcast in 1999, Pillar (2001) shows that 73.4 percent made use of a language other than German, with English having a major share of the pie. Bajko (1999) concludes that the use of English became dominant in the 1990s in German advertising (Piller, 2003: 174).

In short, mixing with English is not only near-universal, but is rapidly on the increase in quantitative as well as qualitative terms since globalization became the marketing mantra.

## **6 Laws and Regulations**

To restrain the use of English in advertising, some countries have in place regulatory statutes. A case in point is the Toubon Law in France which came into effect in 1994. Articles 2 and 12 of this law aim at restricting the use of English in the French media. Article 12 requires any foreign language words in advertising to be accompanied by their corresponding equivalents in French with the following condition: the equivalents in French must be as legible, audible, or intelligible as the foreign language version (Martin, 1998). The law safeguards the use of French against English in French media and advertising. The newly independent countries of the former Soviet Union have similar regulations in place. In countries such as Lithuania and Armenia, government regulations include language police, who play a crucial role in confining the influx of English.

## **7 World Englishes in Roman Scripts and Language Attitudes**

The extent of English usage in global advertising is greater than meets the eye. In Asian and European countries, it is a common practice to write English



lexical items in non-Roman scripts such as Hangul (Korea), Katakana (Japan), Devanagari, Gurmukhi or scores of other Indic language scripts, and Arabic (India, Pakistan or Arabic-speaking countries). Of course, Roman and non-Roman script mixing is also a common sight. Clearly, such ads are aimed at consumers who may not be fluent or even literate in English. On the surface, this might appear to be counter-intuitive and counter-productive. However at the deeper level, this practice is reflective of the underlying assumption or unconscious planning on the part of national or international advertisers who expect their readers to be somewhat bilingual in English. This is in agreement with their conception of the global citizen: in order to be a global citizen, some knowledge of English is a prerequisite.

Not only is English, with or without Roman letters, introduced, but an attempt is also made not to deprive consumers of the meaning and pronunciation of English phrases by employing strategies such as paraphrasing or translating English expressions into local script. How does one introduce English in countries such as Japan where the incidence of bilingualism with English is perhaps less than one percent? Consider the ad in Figure 33.2. Notice that

●ファイナル ステージ プレミアム

# FINAL STAGE Premiumの肩&背中見せ

女らしさをアピールするなら黒×肌見せに勝る法則ナシ / だけど大胆すぎちゃいけません。リボンで首回り&袖の開き具合が調節できるこのトップスなら、大人&セクシーに決まります!

ココがエライ! 3  
優秀ディテール

- 1 リボンで肩の開きが調節できる  
普通に結べば下の背中さんみたいに背中見せ。ゆるめに結べば左の聖子みたいにオフショルに。優秀!
- 2 腕の開きもリボンで調節可能  
長袖～五分袖が自由自在 / きつめに結べば、シャーリングとリボンが目立ってキュートな印象 / ゆるめに結ぶとちょいルーズで大人な印象。

裾の切り替えてウエストマーク!

Figure 33.2 English expression and its pronunciation guide in katakana

**Table 33.1** Script mixing in global advertising: functions

Covert	Overt
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bilingualism through English</li> <li>• Positive linguistic attitudes toward English</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mixing of native and non-native Englishes</li> <li>• Paraphrasing, reiteration, puns, other stylistic functions</li> <li>• Structural accommodation</li> <li>• Linguistic accommodation</li> </ul>

right above the English expression (Final Stage Premium) is printed a pronunciation guide for Japanese consumers in the Katakana script.

What is interesting about such practices is that not only does script mixing and English mixing in non-Roman scripts set the stage for bilingualism, but it also provides a fertile ground for the mixing of native and non-native Englishes. For instance, the pronunciation guide in the Japanese ad adapts the target English expression with CVCV-type phonological adaptation. The main functions of script mixing are summarized in Table 33.1.

## 8 Determinants and Functions of World Englishes

The quantitative and qualitative pattern of use of English worldwide has added yet another, but invisible, dimension to English which can be termed the “mystique factor.” English mixing is not motivated by low-level considerations such as borrowings, i.e., the use of English to fill a lexical gap in the host language. After all, is there a language in the world which lacks an English equivalent of words such as *new*, *design*, or *juice*? The use of English is motivated by the deeper, creative desires on the part of advertisers (see Martin, 1998, 1999 on the perception of English as a powerful creative tool on the part of French advertisers and copywriters). English is considered to be a “cool” language capable of rendering audience identity (as international, modern, rational, objective, ethno-cultural stereotypes etc.) and appeal of the product (as standard, American or British). For more details see Bhatia and Ritchie (2004).

In addition to rendering the socio-psychological features and indexing identities, mixing with English performs other literary and psycholinguistic functions such as rhyming (*Trentenaire On Air* – a French radio station ad), reduplication (*MyMy Workman* in a Korean ad), puns (*must* with two meanings: English *must* and Hindi *must* ‘crazy’), humor, slogans (changing value system: a slogan such as “Freedom is my birth right” aimed at gender equality and empowerment). These functions have immense psycholinguistic power

since they play important roles in product recall and information primacy effects. These are special effects and creative meanings which advertisers strive for. Creativity through English enables them to conquer the negative social evaluation of mixing.

### **8.1 Creativity or deception?**

The aim of an ad is to inform and persuade consumers to buy a product. But these two aims do not carry equal weight. In the process of persuading consumers ads sometimes go overboard, either intentionally or unintentionally. Therefore, the boundary between creativity and deception becomes blurred. Holbrook (1978) and Shimp (1983) distinguish between factual and evaluative advertising. Factual advertising refers to factual claims in a real-world situation, like pricing, packing, and product attributes. The truth-value or validity of factual advertising claims can easily be assessed. In contrast, evaluative advertising refers to what is called in the advertising register, "Puffery." Puffery, or evaluative advertising, refers to those aspects of advertising that make advertising more like an art. It makes subjective claims that can neither be empirically proved nor disproved. The use of English for deceptive purposes is no longer limited to the Anglophone countries. With English quickly becoming the near-universal language of product naming, and the forces of globalization (top-down and bottom-up) at work, English is leading in the race of global deception. Consider the case of rural India, where English has become a powerful weapon of deliberate deception. Even leading brand name products such as *Lifebuoy* and *Boroline* are not spared. Relying heavily on the copied logos and other visual signs, deceptive marketers change a letter of the product name in English and deceive villagers into thinking that they are buying a brand name product. *Lifebuoy* is spelled as *Lifeboy* and *Boroline* as *Boriline* to cheat the unsuspecting villager. Such problems are not unique to rural India; the growing role of deception involving English product names is an increasingly pervasive phenomenon.

## **9 Globalization: Resolving the Global vs. Local Paradox**

As pointed out earlier, as urban markets reach the point of saturation and conventional advertising loses its punch, international marketers turn to the new and emerging semi-urban and rural markets of Asia, Africa, and South America. This trend marks the process of globalization from the bottom up which calls for a new approach to marketing communication and innovative ways of reaching the potential four billion consumers. Although mass media are very popular around the globe, the search for unconventional ways to send commercial messages is gaining prominence. In many countries of Asia and Africa, wall advertising/painting is quite popular not only with local/

**Table 33.2** Models of globalization: competitive and cooperative

Model	Approach	Language/Script	Text
Competitive	Either/or	One	Monolingual
Cooperative	Mixed	Two or more	Bilingual or multilingual

regional/national advertisers but also international advertisers. What might appear to be graffiti to a Western eye, wall advertising, is a very powerful form of reaching rural audiences (see Bhatia, 2000 for more details on the structure, power, and reach of this media modality). This section will discuss globalization with special reference to this media modality to demonstrate the scope and magnitude of the impact of world Englishes in global advertising.

What is intriguing to observe is that advertisers, either unconsciously or by design, have developed two distinct models of globalization in relation to localization, which, in turn, govern their linguistic representational strategies and linguistic choices. These views can be characterized as “competitive” and “cooperative.” The two divergent views naturally lead to two distinct underlying linguistic representational strategies in global advertising: the competitive view leads to language segregation, whereas the cooperative view yields language mixing. Language segregation is the natural outcome of the perception of globalization and localization as oppositions, while language integration is the consequence of the perceived accommodation between the two. The perceived models of globalization and its linguistic renderings are summarized in Table 33.2. Based on these two models, three distinct patterns are evident in advertising worldwide. The first two patterns lend themselves to language separation.

### 9.1 *Think global and act global*

This pattern is carried out by means of English only, preferably by native varieties of English in Roman letters. The global brands which subscribe to this type of advertising are Coke, Pepsi, Nike, etc. Not only top-down, but even bottom-up globalization reflects this approach. Following the standardization model of international advertising, Coke and Pepsi display their brands both in non-conventional and conventional media forms. Global advertisers have begun to paint walls in rural India so vigorously that no standing structure is spared. Two years ago when Coke and Pepsi ads appeared painted on rocks on the 33-mile stretch of the road between Manali and Rohtang Pass in the ecologically sensitive areas of the Himalayan region of India, environmental groups (including earth scientists) filed a legal suit against these companies, charging them with violation of the Forest Conservation Act of India (see Bagla, 2002).

## 9.2 Think local and act local

On the opposite side from the think-global-and-act-global ads fall the think-local-and-act-local type of ads. These ads strive for hyper-localization through local languages and indigenous scripts and illustrate the strategy of glocalization through language mixing.

Some ads depart from the exclusive “think global and act global” strategy and make room for globalization by way of bridging with localization. Reaching the masses by means of local languages and scripts paves the way for a safe and less risky globalization appeal. Although the approaches are overtly mutually exclusive both in conceptual and linguistic terms, the localization-to-globalization gap is bridged primarily by nonlinguistic means – either by sharing logographic properties of the product or by maintaining the common color scheme.

Rather than relying on visual cues and an indirect approach, some ads rely on content-sensitive means to induce some degree of globalization. A case in point is the ad for *Aral engine oil*, a German product (Figure 33.3).

- (1) araal – jarmanii kaa nambar ek injan aail.  
 Aral Germany of number one engine oil.  
 ‘Aral – the number one German engine oil.’



Figure 33.3 Bridging the global vs. local divide

The message has a topic-comment structure. The topic, *Aral* (the product name) is separated from the comment – *the number one German engine oil* – by the slight, rising wall dividing the two portions of the wall. The entire ad is in the Devanagari script and the grammatical markers are those of Hindi. The suggestion of global appeal is brought about by the content of the comment structure. The affiliation part contains information about the Germanic association of the product, and the evaluation part reveals that the product is the number one product.

Rather than pitting global appeals against local or satisfying themselves with minimal content (as in the standardized ads displaying one word – Coke, Pepsi), the unmarked pattern, both on qualitative and quantitative grounds, in global advertising is that advertisers break the barriers posed by linguistic segregation and attempt to integrate the globalization and localization themes by integrating the participating linguistic systems and their scripts. This is an optimization strategy which subscribes to the “think and act both global and local at the same time” approach, which renders optimization in the strength and appeal of their messages. One of the outcomes of this strategy is the increased use of Inner-Circle Englishes together with national and local brands of Englishes, on the one hand, and the creation of their own modes and standards of mixing English, on the other. *Staba* stands for Starbucks Coffee in Japan, MacDonal’d’s is called either *Mac* (Tokyo area) or *Macdo* (in the western areas such as Osaka and Nagoya). The process of globalization from the bottom up has opened the flood-gates of English in those remote parts of the world which were earlier out of the reach of English.

### 9.3 *Cross-cultural translations and intelligibility*

Cross-cultural translations are another salient feature of globalization. The question of appropriateness and acceptance of world Englishes in advertising figures prominently in two contexts: cross-cultural translational mishaps and intelligibility of Inner-Circle English commercials for Outer- and Expanding-Circle consumers. Translation mishaps/blunders and product failure within and outside the English-speaking countries have been the major concern of cross-cultural advertising on the part of global advertisers, media practitioners, and marketers. When the Scandinavian makers of the Electrolux vacuum cleaner wanted to promote their product in the USA, they used the following slogan: “Nothing sucks like an Electrolux.” The negative connotation of the verb “sucks” in American English did not add to the success of the product. The same is true of Japanese product names such as *Calpis Water*, and *Pocari Sweat*: they are perfectly acceptable lexical innovations for Japanese consumers, but it is not the case for markets of the Inner-Circle English regions. In India, *Eveready Torch* is an acceptable product name of a flashlight, but for the speakers of American English, it flashes the picture of arson, aggression, and violence. A chilled beer is written as “Child Bear” in an Indian shop. A sign “sex shop” for a shop in China is not a taboo; such stores sell herbal tea or

other general health products (vitamins, etc.). However, such names highlight the problems of intelligibility and lexical semantic asymmetries between the world varieties of Englishes. Hence, some studies, such as those by Gerritsen et al. (2000) are concerned with the comprehension of Inner-Circle English commercials on the part of Dutch consumers.

The use of foreign languages and non-Inner-Circle Englishes in ads aimed at Inner-Circle consumers has also had its own share of problems which range from complaints of the editors about ungrammatical use of English to incomprehensible content causing emotive reactions such as ads being “too foreign” and “too annoying.” While the ads exploit the good, the bad and the ugly of “foreignness” or “otherness,” as Kelley-Holms (2005) shows, the main function of such usage is to exploit national stereotypes (e.g., Germans as mechanical and thorough; Indians as mystic). Starbucks’ product names such as *taazo cay* (use of Rajashthani Hindi and Gujarati) and sizes (e.g., Spanish and Italian: *grande*) optimize the appeal of the message while appropriately highlighting the multilingual context of English in the Inner Circle.

## 10 Conclusion

International advertising and media is a fertile ground for the mixing of world Englishes, on one hand, and the mixing of English and other languages on the other. Contrary to the expectations and predictions of market gurus and proponents of the “Standardization” strategy, even in the age of super-branding and hyper-globalization, international advertising does not exclusively favor the use of Inner-Circle English and its accents. Language mixing in general and the mixing of world Englishes in particular is an unwritten law of international advertising which enables international advertisers to optimize the strength and the appeal of their message in terms of audience identity construction, product branding, and socio-psychological rendering of both audience and products.

## 11 Future Directions for Research

In order to tap the conscious and unconscious knowledge which plays a critical role in the creation of ads, it is imperative to understand the complex process in the making of an ad. How do features of market research and product positioning map onto an ad copy? How is an ad adapted or created cross-culturally in the age of hyper-globalization by making visual and linguistic choices? In order to answer these questions and gain insights into the process of standardization and/or adaptation of cross-cultural ads, interdisciplinary research and dialog among the users of world Englishes and international advertisers is needed. Marketing research on the linguistic aspects (including the use of English) suffers from conceptual and analytical oversimplification

(e.g., the treatment of English mixing as loans), which interdisciplinary research can rectify. Research on the use of world Englishes in non-conventional media, audience reaction and attitudes toward non-conventional media and world Englishes is still in the infant stage. In order to gain proper perspectives into the pluralistic nature of world Englishes/global communication and the advertising media, the integration of conceptual, analytical, and experimental frameworks is imperative at the interdisciplinary level.

See also Chapters 22, GENRES AND STYLES IN WORLD ENGLISHES; 32, WORLD ENGLISHES AND THE MEDIA; 34, WORLD ENGLISHES AND GLOBAL COMMERCE.

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